IRS DECLARES NOV. 14 AS SPECIAL
TAXPAYER PROBLEM SOLVING DAY

WASHINGTON -- The Internal Revenue Service will reach out to help taxpayers across the country Nov. 14 in a special Saturday trouble-shooting program aimed at helping people with tax problems.

At 41 locations, taxpayers will be able to cut through red tape by getting one-on-one help from IRS experts.

The weekend event marks the one-year anniversary of Problem Solving Day, the IRS program that has resolved more than 30,000 taxpayer problems. The program has become a cornerstone of the agency's new emphasis on taxpayer service.

"Problem Solving Day shows how we're doing things differently at the IRS these days," said Charles Rossotti, Commissioner of Internal Revenue. "We want to go the extra mile to help taxpayers, which includes working on the weekend."

"Problems can -- and do -- get fixed with this program," said Taxpayer Advocate Val Oveson, whose office runs Problem Solving Day.

The November meetings will take place simultaneously in each of the 33 IRS districts, with several of the branches holding sessions at more than one site. Top agency administrators and other experts will gather for face-to-face meetings with individual taxpayers about their problems.

(more)

"These sessions present an opportunity for many taxpayers to quickly iron out their problems," Oveson said.

That's because IRS district administrators will be in the same room at the same time tackling the same questions. In some cases, issues that can take weeks to get sorted out can be worked out during one sit-down meeting.

"People will be able to slice through the red tape by having the complete attention of the agency's decision-makers," Oveson said. "We'll have the right people in place with the expertise and the ability to get things done."

During the past year, the IRS resolved 31,482 cases that were brought to the agency's attention during Problem Solving Day program. More than half the cases revolved around seven issues raised by taxpayers: audit reconsiderations, compromise offers, installment agreements for tax payments, requests for technical or procedural explanations, questions about IRS inquiries, tax penalties and inability to pay.

Surveys show taxpayers like the program. In July, a survey of participants showed 89 percent gave the program's overall service a grade of six or seven -- the highest scores possible.

A year ago this weekend, the IRS launched Problem Solving Day following concerns about taxpayer treatment. What emerged was an innovative approach of opening IRS doors on the weekend and bringing agency workers together to brainstorm on solving taxpayer problems.

More than 6,200 taxpayers attended the first Problem Solving Day, which was conducted simultaneously across the country. Subsequent sessions were held once a month, with the time and location varying by district.

"With this program, we've come a long way in the last 12 months to help out taxpayers," Rossotti said. "But more needs to be done. This past year represents a down payment on what we must continue doing in the future -- putting taxpayer service first."

Like last year's inaugural Problem Solving Day, the Nov. 14 event will be conducted from coast-to-coast.

Taxpayers interested in attending are encouraged to make reservations by calling their local IRS office or the national toll-free number at 1-800-829-1040. People can also visit without an appointment, but a reservation will help ensure the right IRS workers are available to deal with their situation. Sometimes, just making the call to the IRS can clear up the problem without making a visit to Problem Solving Day.

"If people are having trouble getting a tax problem worked out, Nov. 14 will be a golden opportunity for them to visit with our people and find a solution," Oveson said.

PROBLEM SOLVING DAY CITIES

State/City/Telephone Number

Alaska
    Anchorage (800) 829-1040

(more)

Arizona
      Phoenix (602) 207-8635

California
      Laguna Niguel (949) 360-2178
      Los Angeles (213) 894-8852
      Sacramento (510) 637-4359
      San Jose (408) 494-8285

Colorado
      Denver (303) 571-4402

Connecticut
      Hartford (860) 240-4156

Florida
      Fort Lauderdale (954) 423-7684
      Maitland (904) 232-1542

Georgia
      Atlanta (404) 331-3485

Hawaii
      Honolulu (800) 829-1040

Illinois
      Chicago (312) 886-0550

Indiana
      Indianapolis (317) 226-5081

Louisiana
      New Orleans (504) 558-3019

Maryland
      Baltimore (410) 962-9337

Massachusetts
      Boston (617) 565-1628

Michigan
    Detroit (313) 628-3670

Minnesota
    St. Paul (651) 290-3061

Missouri
    Chesterfield (314) 539-6900

New Jersey
    Cherry Hill (973) 921-4377
    Paterson (973) 921-4377

New York
    Brooklyn (718) 488-3601
    Buffalo (716) 551-4574
    Manhattan (212) 436-1013

North Carolina
    Greensboro (336) 378-2334

Ohio
    Akron (513) 684-3094

Oklahoma
    Oklahoma City (405) 297-4745

Oregon
    Portland (503) 326-3295

Pennsylvania
    Pittsburgh (412) 281-0281

Rhode Island
    Providence (401) 528-4317

Tennessee
    Nashville (615) 736-5423

Texas
      Austin (512) 499-5000
      Farmers Branch (972) 308-1019
      Fort Worth (817) 978-3477
      Houston (713) 209-4506

Virginia
      Richmond (804) 771-2292

Washington
      Kennewick (800) 829-1040

West Virginia
      Charleston (804) 771-2292

Wisconsin
      Milwaukee (414) 297-1260

International/Puerto Rico
      San Juan (501) 787-4501

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